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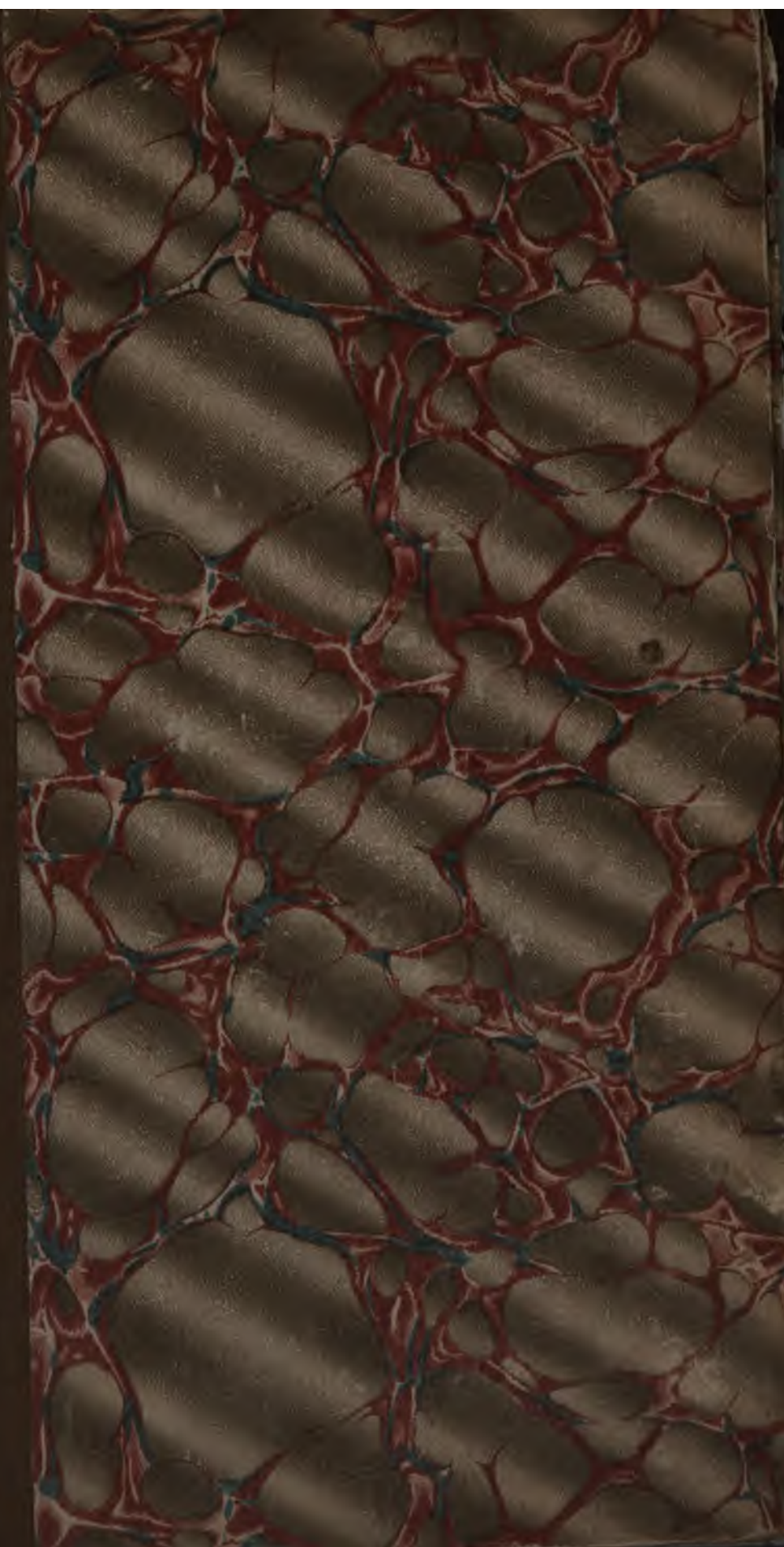
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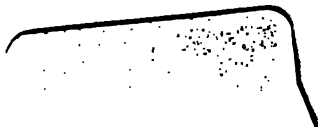
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THE
IMPORT OF THE TOTEM

A STUDY FROM THE

OMAHA TRIBE

BY

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A STUDY FROM THE OMAHA TRIBE: THE IMPORT OF THE TOTEM. By
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Mass.

In this study of the significance of the Omaha totem, the aim will be to set forth, as clearly as possible, first, what these Indians believed concerning their totems; and, secondly, what these totems stood for in the tribal structure.

There will be no attempt in this paper to treat the subject of totems in a world sense; the experience of many years of research within a limited area has shown the writer that close, careful studies of the various tribes and races of the two hemispheres, are as yet too few to afford sufficient evidence for a final summing up, from which to deduce points held in common, or the equally important lines of divergence, found in the beliefs and customs involved in the use of totems.

It is proper to call attention at the outset to a few of the perplexities of a research at first hand, in a matter as recondite as that under consideration. There is the difficulty of adjusting one's own mental attitude, of preventing one's own mental atmosphere from deflecting and distorting the image of the Indian's thought. The fact that the implications of the totem are so rooted in the Indian's mentality, that he is unconscious of any strangeness in them, and is unable to discuss them objectively, constitutes a grave obstacle to be overcome. Explanations of his beliefs, customs and practices, have to be sought by indirect rather than by direct methods, have to be eliminated from a tangle of contradictions, and verified by the careful noting of the many little unconscious acts and sayings of the people, which let in a flood of light, revealing the Indian's mode of thought, and disclosing its underlying ideas. By these slow processes, with the analysis of his songs, rituals and ceremonies, we can at last come upon his beliefs concerning nature and life, and it is upon these that the totem is based.

There were two classes of totems known among the Omahas: the Personal, belonging to the individual; and the Social, that of societies and gentes.

The Personal Totem.—The question first to arise is, How did the individual obtain his totem? We learn that it was not received from an ancestor, was not the gift of any living person, but was derived through a certain rite, by the man himself.

In the Legend of the Sacred Pole of the Omahas, which has been handed down from generations, and which gives a rapid history of the people from the time when "they opened their eyes and beheld the day"

to the completed organization of the tribe, we are told: "The people felt themselves weak and poor. Then the old men gathered together and said; Let us make our children cry to Wa-kon'-da. . . . So all the parents took their children, covered their faces with soft clay, and sent them forth to lonely places. . . . The old men said, You shall go forth to cry to Wa-kon'-da. . . . When on the hills you shall not ask for any particular thing, . . . whatever is good, that may Wa-kon'-da give. . . . Four days and nights upon the hills the youth shall pray, crying, and when he stops, shall wipe his tears with the palms of his hands, lift his wet hands to heaven, then lay them on the earth. . . . This was the people's first appeal to Wa-kon'-da."

This rite, called by the untranslatable name Non'-zhin-zhon, has been observed up to the present time. When the youth had reached the age of puberty, he was instructed by his parents as to what he was to do. Moistened earth was put upon his head and face, a small bow and arrows given him, and he was directed to seek a secluded spot upon the hills, and there to chant the prayer which he had been taught, and to lift his hands wet with his tears to heaven, and then to lay them upon the earth; and he was to fast until at last he fell into a trance or sleep. If, in his trance or dream, he saw or heard anything, that thing was to become the special medium through which he could receive supernatural aid. The ordeal over, the youth returned home to partake of food and to rest. No one questioned him, and for four days he spoke but little, for if within that time he should reveal his vision, it would be the same as lost to him. Afterwards he could confide it to some old man, known to have had a similar manifestation, and it then became the duty of the youth to seek until he should find the animal he had seen in his trance, when he must slay it and preserve some part of it (in cases where the vision had been of no concrete form, symbols were taken to represent it); this memento was ever after to be the sign of his vision, his totem, the most sacred thing he could ever possess, for by it his natural powers were to be so reinforced as to give him success as a hunter, victory as a warrior, and even the power to see into the future.

Belief concerning Nature and Life.—The foundation of the Indian's faith in the efficacy of the totem rested upon his belief concerning nature and life. This belief was complex and involved two prominent ideas: first, that all things, animate and inanimate, were permeated by a common life; and, second, that this life could not be broken, but was continuous.

The Common Life.—The idea of a common life was in its turn complex, but its dominating force was conceived to be that which man recognized within himself as will power. This power which could make or bring to pass he named Wa-kon'-da.

The question arises, did the Omaha regard Wa-kon'-da as a supreme being? There is no evidence that he did so regard the power represented by that word, nor is there any intimation that he had ever conceived of a single great ruling spirit.

Anthropomorphism.—The word Wa-kon'-da appears to have expressed the Indian's conception of immanent life, manifest in all things. Growing out of this conception was a kind of anthropomorphism; the characteristics of man were projected upon all nature: the Rock, in the rituals, was addressed as "Aged One!" sitting with "furrowed brow" and "wrinkled loins;" the Tree lived a double life in the Indian's fancy; as did the Water, the Fire, the Winds, and the Animals. This duality can be recognized in myths, in legends, in rituals, and in the paraphernalia of ceremonies, in which there is a constant confusion of the external aspect and the anthropomorphic conception. All things were distinct from man, but in the subtle bond of a common life, embodying the idea of will, or directive energy, they were akin to him, and could lend him the aid of their special powers, even as he could help or hinder his fellow men.

Will-power.—We trace the Omaha's estimate of his own will-power in the act called Wa-zhin'-dhe-dhe (wa-zhin, directive energy; dhe-dhe to send;), in which, through the singing of certain songs, strength could be sent to the absent warrior in the stress of battle; or thought and will be projected to help a friend win a game or a race; or even so to influence the mind of a man, as to affect its receptivity of the supernatural. Aside from the individual practice of this power, there was, so to speak, a collective energy exercised by the Hon'-he-wa-chi society in the act of Wa-zhin'-a-gdhe (wa-zhin, directive energy; a-gdhe, to place upon;), where the members so fixed their will upon an obnoxious person, as to isolate him from all helpful relations with men and animals, and leave him to die. A similar ability to aid or to injure was imputed to the elements and all natural forms. The Winds could bring health to man; the Stone insure him long life; the Elk could endow the pursued with speed; and the Hawk make the warrior sure to fall upon his enemy. But it is to be noticed, that while man's own will was believed to act directly, without intervening instrumentality upon his fellows, the supplementing of man's powers by the elements and the animals, was obtainable only after an appeal to Wa-kon'-da, in the rite of the vision.

The Appeal.—The prayer, which formed a part of the rite of the vision, was called Wa-kon'-da gi-kon. Gi gi-kon' is to weep, from loss as that of kindred; the prefix gi indicates possession. Gi-kon is to weep from want of something not possessed, from conscious insufficiency, and the longing for something that could bring happiness or prosperity. The words of the prayer, wa-kon'-da dhe-dhu wah-pa'-dhin a-ton'-he, literally rendered are, wa-kon'-da here needy I stand. (A-ton-he is in the third person, and implies the first, as he stands, and I am he; a form of speech used to indicate humility.) While this prayer has been combined with many rites and acts, its inherent unity of name and words has been preserved through generations of varied experience and social development of the people.¹

¹ This prayer can be seen on page 136, Song No. 73, of Vol. 1, No. 5, of the Archaeological and Ethnological papers of the Peabody Museum.—Harvard University.

Wa-kon'-da was a vague entity to the Omaha, but the anthropomorphic coloring was not lacking in the general conception; the prayer voiced man's ever present consciousness of dependence, was a craving for help, and implied a belief in some mysterious power able to understand, and respond to his appeal. The response came in a dream, or trance, wherein an appearance spoke to the man, thus initiating a relation between them, which was not established until the man, by his own effort, had procured a symbol of his visitant, which might be a feather of the bird, a tuft of hair from the animal, a black stone, or a translucent pebble. This memento or totem was never an object of worship; it was the man's credential, the fragment, to connect its possessor with the potentiality of the whole species represented by the form seen in his vision, and through which the man's strength was to be reinforced and disaster averted.

Basis of the Efficacy of the Totem.—The efficacy of the totem was based upon the Omaha's belief in the continuity of life, a continuity which not only linked the visible to the invisible, and bound the living to the dead, but which kept unbroken the thread of life running through all things, making it impossible for the part and the entirety to be dissociated. Thus, one man could gain power over another by obtaining a lock of his hair, which brought the man himself under his influence. In the ceremony of the first cutting of the child's hair, the severed lock which was given to the Thunder god, placed the life of the child in the keeping of the god. Again, when a man's death had been predicted — by one gifted to see into the future — the disaster could be averted by certain ceremonies which included the cutting off a lock of hair from one side of the head, and a bit of flesh from the arm on the opposite side of the body, and casting them into the fire; by this sacrifice of a part, the whole was represented, the prediction fulfilled, and the man permitted to live. From the ritual of the Corn, sung when the priest distributed the kernels to indicate that the time for planting had come, we learn that these kernels were the little portions which would draw to themselves the living corn. In the ritual sung over the Sacred Buffalo Hide prior to the hunt, the same idea is present, that in the continuity of life, the part is ever connected with the whole, and that the Sacred Buffalo Hide was able to bring within reach the living animal itself.

Limitation in Totems.—The totem opened a means of communication between man and the various agencies of his environment but it could not transcend the power of its particular species; consequently all totems were not equally potent. Men who saw the Bear in their visions were liable to be wounded in battle, as the bear was slow of movement, clumsy and easily trapped, although a savage fighter when brought to bay. Winged forms, such as the Eagle, having greater range of sight than the creatures which traveled upon the ground, could bestow upon the men to whom they came in the dream the gift of looking into the future and foretelling coming events. Thunder gave the ability to control the elements, and the authority to conduct certain religious rites.

Despite the advantages to be derived from the possession of certain totems, the inculcations given when the youth was instructed in the rite of the vision, and taught the prayer he was to sing, forbade him to ask for any special gift, or the sight of any particular thing; he was simply to wait without fear, and to accept without question, whatever Wa-kon'-da might vouchsafe to send him. No man was able to choose his personal totem, but it was the general belief of the people that the powerful animals and agencies were apt to be drawn toward those who possessed natural gifts of mind, and strength of will.

Nature of the Totems.—The totems of the Omahas referred to animals, the Bear, the Buffalo, the Deer, the Birds, the Turtle, and Reptiles; to the Corn; to the elements, the Winds, the Earth, the Water, and Thunder. There was nothing among them which in any way represented the human family, nor was there any trace of ancestor worship; the relation between the man and his totem did not lie along the line of natural kinship, but rested upon the peculiarities in his theory of nature, in which the will and ability to bring to pass, which he was conscious of within himself, he projected upon the universe which encompassed him. The rite of the vision was a dramatization of his abstract ideas of life and nature, and the totem was the representation of the vision in a concrete form.

THE SOCIAL TOTEM AND WHAT IT STOOD FOR IN THE TRIBE.

We have thus far seen the influence of the totem upon the individual. We are now to trace it as exerted upon groups of people; in the Religious societies; in the Ton'-won-gdhon or gens; and in the development and organization of the tribe.

Religious Societies.—The totem's simplest form of social action was in the Religious societies, whose structure was based upon the grouping together of men who had received similar visions. Those who had seen the Bear made up the Bear society; those to whom the Thunder or Water beings had come formed the Thunder or the Pebble society. The membership came from every kinship group in the tribe, blood relationship was ignored, the bond of union being a common right in a common vision. These brotherhoods gradually developed a classified membership with initiatory rites, rituals, and officials set apart to conduct the ceremonies.

The function of the totem in the societies was intermediate between that of the individual totem, and the totem in its final social office, where it presided over an artificial structure, in which natural conditions were in part overruled, and the people inevitably bound together. In some of the tribes of the linguistic group to which the Omahas belong, where the political structure of the gens is apparently weak and undeveloped, the Religious societies exist and are powerful in their organization. This fact, with other evidence which cannot be detailed here owing to its complex nature, together with the similarity traceable between the rituals and ceremonies of these Religious societies, and those incident to the

inauguration of gentile and tribal officers, makes it seem probable, that the training and experience, derived from the working of these earlier societies, had taught the Leaders among the Omahas and their close cognates, certain lessons in organization, by which they had profited during the formative period of the artificial social structure of the Ton'-won-gdhon or gens.

The Ton'-won-gdhon.—The word Ton'-won-gdhon, means a place of dwellings, where kindred dwelt together. There were ten Ton'-won-gdhon u-zhu—dominant, ruling Ton'-won-gdhon, or gentes, in the Omaha tribe. These gentes practised exogamy, and traced their descent only through the father. Each gens had its particular name, which referred directly or symbolically to its totem, which was kept in mind by the practice of tabu. There was also a set of names peculiar to each gens, all having the same reference, one of which was bestowed upon each child; an Omaha's gentile name, therefore, would at once reveal his kinship group or gens. This name was proclaimed at the time of the ceremony attendant upon the cutting of the first lock of hair. After this ceremony the child's hair was cut in a fashion to symbolize the totem of its gens, and each spring, until it was about seven years of age, this peculiar trimming of the hair was repeated. The teaching of this object lesson, so placed before the children, was reënforced by their training in the strict observance of the special tabu of their gentes, holding ever before them the penalties for its violation, of blindness, physical deformity, and disease.

There were religious rites peculiar to each gens in which the members did homage to the special power represented by the gentile totem. In these ceremonies, the hereditary chiefs of the gens were the priests. It is easy to see why the totem was never forgotten, why its sign was borne through life, and at last put upon the dead, in order that they might be at once recognized by their kindred, and not wander as they passed into the spirit world.

Office of the Totem in the Gens.—In the early struggle for existence, the advantages accruing from a permanent kinship group, both in resisting aggression and in securing a food supply, could not fail to have been perceived; and, if the people were to become homogeneous and the practice of exogamy continue, some expedient must have been devised by which permanent groups could be maintained, and kinship lines be defined. The common belief of the people, kept virile by the universal practice of the rite of the vision, furnished this expedient, — a device which could be understood and accepted by all, — the concrete sign of the vision, the totem of the Leader, he whose abilities and prowess evinced supernatural favor, and won for his followers success and plenty.

From a study of the minutiae of the customs and ceremonies within the gens, it is apparent that their underlying purpose was to impress upon the people the knowledge and the duties of kindred, and, that one of the most important of these duties was the maintenance of the union of the gens. This union of kindred we find to have been guarded by the agency

of the totem. The name of the gens, the personal names of its members, and the practice of tabu,—obligatory upon all persons, except the hereditary chiefs, while they were officiating in the gentile rites pertaining to the totem,—indicate a common allegiance to a supernatural presence believed to preside over the gens by virtue of its relation to the common ancestor. These rites did not imply ancestor worship, but were a recognition of the special power represented by the totem. We also find that the gentile totem and its rites did not interfere with a man's freedom in seeking his personal totem, nor of his use of it when desiring help from the mysterious powers. The gentile totem gave no immediate hold upon the supernatural, as did the individual totem to its possessor; outside the rites already referred to, it served solely as a mark of kinship, and its connection with the supernatural was manifest only in its punishment of the violation of tabu. Briefly stated, the inculcation of the gentile totem was, that the individual belonged to a definite kinship group, from which he could never sever himself without incurring supernatural punishment.

Social growth depended upon the establishment of distinct groups, and the one power adequate for the purpose, was that which was believed to be capable of enforcing the union of the people by supernaturally inflicted penalties. The constructive influence of the totem is apparent in the unification of the Ton'-won-gdhon or gens, without which the organization of the tribe would have been impossible.

The Influence of the Religious Societies upon the Gens.—In the Religious societies the people were made familiar with the idea that a common vision could create a sort of brotherhood. This fraternity was recognized and expressed by the observance of rites and ceremonies,—in which all the members took part,—setting forth the peculiar power of the totem. The influence of this training in the Religious societies is traceable in the structure of the gens, where the sign of a vision, the totem, became the symbol of a bond between the people, augmenting the natural tie of blood relationship in an exogamous group. We find this training further operative in the establishment of rites and ceremonies in honor of the gentile totem, which bore a strong resemblance to those already familiar to the people in the societies. In the gens the hereditary chief was the priest, and this centralization of authority tended to foster the political development of the gens.

Related Totems.—Certain fixed habits of thought among the Omahas growing out of their theories and beliefs concerning nature and life—upon which the totem was based—present a curious mixture of abstractions and anthropomorphism, blended with practical observations of nature. Thus, in the varied experiences of disintegration and coalescing during past generations, composite gentes came into existence through the supposed affinity of totems. Out of the ten Omaha gentes, three only observe a single tabu; the other seven were composed of sub-groups, called Ton'-won-gdhon u-zhinga (u-zhinga, a small part), each of which had its own special tabu, obligatory upon its own members only, and not

upon the other sub-groups of the gens. While there was no common totem in a composite gens, the totems of the sub-groups which formed such gens, had a kind of natural relation to each other; the objects they symbolized were more or less affiliated in the natural world, as for example: in the *Mon'-dhin-ka-ga-he* gens (the earth makers), where the totems of the sub-groups represented the earth, the stone, and the animals that lived in holes in the ground, as the wolf.

The relation between the totems of composite gentes is not always patent; it frequently exists because of fancied resemblances, or from a subtle association growing out of conditions which have sequence in the Indian mind, although disconnected, and at variance with our own observation and reason.

The Totem in the Tribal Organization.—The families within a gens pitched their tents in a particular order or form, which was that of a nearly complete circle, an opening being left as an entrance way into the enclosed space. This encampment was called by the untranslatable name, *Hu'-dhu-ga*. When the entire tribe camped together, each of the ten gentes, while still preserving its own internal order, opened its line of tents and became a segment of the greater tribal *Hu'-dhu-ga*, in which each gens had its fixed unchangeable position, so that the opening of the tribal *Hu'-dhu-ga* was always between the same two gentes. Both these gentes were related to Thunder. That upon the right, as one entered the circle, was the *In-shta'-thun-da*—flashing eye—known as the Thunder gens or people. To a sub-group of this gens belonged the right of consecrating the child to the Thunder god, in the ceremony of cutting the first lock of hair; another sub-group kept the ritual used in filling the Sacred Tribal Pipes. On the left of the entrance camped the *We'-zhin-shte*,—a symbolic name, probably meaning the representatives of anger. The *We'-zhin-shte* were Elk people, having in charge the Sacred Tent of War, in which the worship of Thunder, as well as all rites pertaining to war, of which Thunder was the god, took place.

It would lead too far afield to follow at great length the inter-relations of the gentes; or the dominance of position and leadership in tribal rites and ceremonies conceded to certain gentes; or to indicate the scars left upon the *Hu'-dhu-ga* by the breaking away of groups of kindred; or the devices used to keep intact an ancient form and order. The point to be borne in mind is, that the position of the gentes in the tribe, and the interlacing of their functions, were regulated by the ascription of different powers to their totems; and that the unification and strengthening of the tribal structure, as in the unification and strengthening of the gens, depended upon the restraining fear of supernatural punishment by the totemic powers.

In this rapid review of Omaha beliefs and customs connected with the totem, many observances have not even been mentioned, and of those indicated, the details have had to be omitted in order to keep strictly within the limits of our subject, but the fundamental ideas which have been briefly considered, will be found to underlie all rites and ceremonies within the tribe.

Linguistic Evidence as to the Totem.— We turn now to the language for further evidence as to the import of the totem.

The name of the concrete sign of the vision is, *Wa-hu'-be*, a sacred thing. The word is applied to sacred objects other than the totem, such as the Sacred Pole, the Sacred Tents, the Sacred Tribal Pipes, etc.

The name of a Religious society always included the name of the manifestation of the vision of its members; for instance, the Bear society was called *Wa'-tha-be i'-dha-e-dhe*, literally rendered is, — the Bear with or by compassion, that is, those upon whom the Bear had compassion. *I'-dha-e-dhe* implies that this compassion, this pity, was aroused by a human being making a personal appeal, either by his destitute appearance or the moving character of his supplication. Usage forbade the application of this word to any emotion excited by animal life; it could only express a feeling between man and man, or between man and the manifestation of *Wa-kon'-da*. It did not represent an abstract idea, as of a virtue, but a feeling awakened by direct contact with need. In the prayer already cited as a part of the rite of the vision, the man makes a direct appeal to *Wa-kon'-da*, (" *Wa-konda!* here needy I stand,") and reference to this act is made in the employment of the word *i'-dha-e-dhe* in the term designating the Religious societies.

The name of a gens indicated its totem, or the characteristic of the group of totems in a composite gens. When the people of a gens were spoken of in reference to their totem, the word *i'-ni-ka-shi-ki-dhe* was used immediately following that of the totem, for instance: — the Thunder people, — the *In-shta'-thun-da* gens, — were called, *In-gdhan i'-ni-ka-shi-ki-dhe*: — *in-gdhan'*, thunder; *i'-ni-ka-shi-ki-dhe* is a composite word, meaning, they make themselves a people with, that is, with thunder they make themselves or become a people. The *We'-zhin-shte* gens, the Elk people, were called *On-pa i'-ni-ka-shi-ki-dhe*, — *on-pa*, elk; with the Elk they make themselves a people. The word *i'-ni-ka-shi-ki-dhe* clearly indicates the constructive character of the totem in the gens.

The set of names which belonged to each gens referred to the sign or totem of a family group; these names were called *ni'-ki-e*, — spoken by a chief, or originated by a chief. The word *ni'-ki-e* points to the formative period when means were being devised to transform the family into a distinct political group; it argues a central authority, a man, a chief; the individual names which he bestowed allude solely to the power behind the chief, the manifestation of his vision represented by his totem, in the favor of which he and his kindred had made themselves a people, *i'-ni-ka-shi-ki-dhe*.

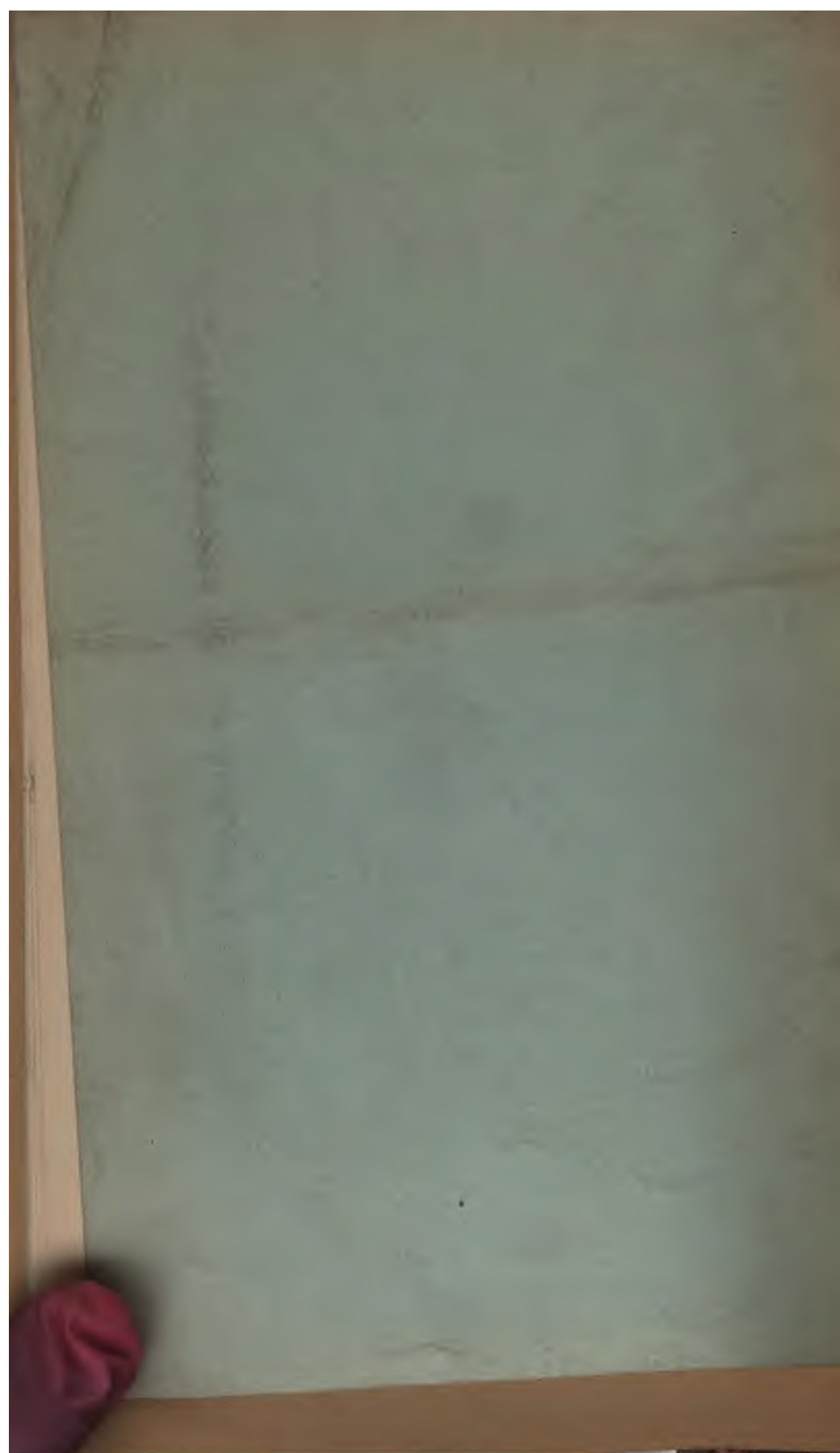
The Osage equivalent of the Omaha word *i'-ni-ka-shi-ki-dhe*, is *zho'-i-ga-ra*, meaning associated with. The Otoe word used for the same purpose is, *ki'-gra-jhe*, they call themselves

The word for tribe *u-ki'-te*, when used as a verb, means to fight, to war against outside enemies, indicating that the need of mutual help impelled the various *Ton'-won-gdhan* (gentes) to band together for self preservation; but the order of their grouping was, as we have seen, controlled by their totems.

Summary. — In the word for tribe, in the formation of the gens within the tribe, and in the rite which brought the individual into what he believed to be direct communication with Wa-kon'-da, we trace the workings of man's consciousness of insecurity and dependence, and see his struggles to comprehend his environment, and to bring himself into helpful relations with the supernatural. And we find in this study of the Omaha totem, that while the elements, the animals and the fruits of the earth, were all related to man through a common life, this relation ran along discrete lines, and that, his appeal for help once granted, relief could only be summoned by means of the Wa-hu'-be, the sacred object, the totem, which brought along its special line the desired supernatural aid.

It is noteworthy that the totems of individuals, as far as known, and those of the gentes, represented the same class of objects or phenomena, and, as totems could be obtained in but one way — through the rite of the vision — the totem of a gens must have come into existence in that manner, and must have represented the manifestation of an ancestor's vision, that of a man whose ability and opportunity served to make him the founder of a family, of a group of kindred who dwelt together, fought together, and learned the value of united strength.





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THE SACRED POLE OF THE OMAHA TRIBE. By ALICE C. FLETCHER,
Peabody Museum, Cambridge, Mass.

In the Peabody Museum of Harvard University have been placed, for safe keeping, the contents of two of the sacred tents of the Omaha tribe of Indians. The Sacred Pole and its pack were deposited in 1888, while the articles pertaining to the sacred tent of war were transmitted four years earlier, in 1884. These relics are unique and of rare ethnological value, and the relinquishing of them by their keepers is, I think, without historic parallel. It came about in this wise. When the changes incident to the impinging of civilization upon the Omahas made it evident to their leading men that ancient tribal observances were no longer possible, the question arose as to what should be done with the sacred objects that for generations had been essential in their ceremonies, and expressive of the authority of those charged with the administration of tribal affairs. To destroy these sacred articles was not to be thought of, and it was suggested that they should be buried with the chiefs of the gens charged with their keeping; which manner of disposal was finally determined upon.

At that time, I was engaged in a serious study of the tribe, and to me, it seemed a grave misfortune that these venerable objects should be suffered to decay, and the full story of the tribe be forever lost, for that story was as yet but imperfectly known; and, until these sacred articles, so carefully hidden, could be examined, it was impossible to gain an inside point of view whence one could study, as from the centre, the ceremonies connected with these articles and their relation to the autonomy of the tribe. The importance of securing these objects became more and more apparent, and influences were brought to bear upon the chiefs who were their keepers to prevent the carrying out of the plan for burial.

After years of labor, wherein large credit must be given to the late Joseph La Flesche, former head chief of the tribe, and to his son, the sacred articles were finally deposited in the Peabody Museum of Harvard University. The transfer was not effected without dramatic incidents evidencing the awe in which these objects were held—objects which, in their unpretending appearance, give little idea of the important part they have played in the history of more than one Indian tribe of our country.

The Omaha tribe is composed of ten Tōñ-wōñ-gdhōñ or villages, to which for convenience sake we apply the term *gentes*; these camped in a fixed place, in a circular form, known as the Hu-dhu-ga, which had its opening to the east; five gentes camped along the line of the northern half and five along the southern half. When the tribe left their villages to go out upon the annual buffalo hunt, at which time they often travelled several hundred miles, the opening of the Hu-dhu-ga was always in the direction in which the tribe was moving; but the idea of orientation was never

lost, for, if the people were going westward, the horseshoe-shaped Hu-dhu-ga turned as on a hinge placed opposite the opening, and the northern half, when the opening faced the east, was still the northern half, now that the opening faced the west. In the mind of the people, the Hu-dhu-ga always opened to the east, and the tribe ideally faced the rising sun, wherever they pitched their tents.

The northern half of the Hu-dhu-ga was called In-shta-sunda, taking the name of the gens that camped at the northern point of the opening. The southern half was known as the Hõn-ga-she-nu, from the Hõnga gens which occupied the middle place among the five gentes forming the south half. All the tents faced or opened toward the space enclosed by the line of lodges forming the Hu-dhu-ga.

There were three tents set apart to contain the sacred objects of the tribe, known as the Dte-waghu-be, or sacred tents. One of these contained the paraphernalia of the ceremonies connected with war. This tent was pitched a short distance in front of those of the We-jin-shte gens, its keeper. This gens camped at the southern end of the opening, opposite the In-shta-sunda gens. The other two sacred tents were set side by side in front of the Hõnga gens, who had them in charge. The tent toward the west held the Hide of the White Buffalo Cow, and the tent cover was decorated upon the outside with stalks of corn in full ear. In the tent towards the east were deposited the Sacred Pole and its belongings, and the decoration on the cover of the lodge was a number of round red spots.

These tents were objects of fear; no one unbidden went near them or touched them, and should any person or any animal or a tent pole come accidentally in contact with any of the three tents, the offending thing must be brought to the keeper, who would wash it with warm water, and brush it with a spray of artemisia, to prevent the evil that was believed to follow such profanation.

The Sacred Pole is of cotton-wood 2 m. 50 cm. in length and bears marks of great age. It has been subjected to manipulation; the bark has been removed, and the pole shaved and shaped at both ends, the top or "head" rounded into a cone-shaped knob and the lower end trimmed to a dull point. Its circumference near the head is 15 cm. 2 mm.; the middle part increases to 19 cm. and is diminished toward the foot to 14 cm. 6 mm. To the lower end is fastened, by strips of tanned hide, a piece of harder wood, probably ash, 55 cm. 2½ mm. in length, rounded at the top with a groove cut to prevent the straps slipping, and with the lower end sharpened so as to be easily driven into the ground. There is a crack in the Sacred Pole extending several cm. above this foot piece, which has probably given rise to a modern idea that this foot piece was added to strengthen or mend the pole when it had become worn with long usage. But the pole itself shows no indication of ever having been in the ground; there is no decay apparent, as is shown on the foot piece whose flattened top proves that it was driven into the ground. Moreover the name of this piece of wood is Zhi-be, leg, and as the pole itself represents a man and as this name Zhi-be is not applied to a piece of wood spliced on to a lengthened pole, it is probable that a foot piece was originally attached to the pole.

Upon this Zhi-be or leg, the pole rested; it was never placed upright,

but inclined forward at an angle of about forty-five degrees and was held firmly in place by a stick, tied to it about 1 m. 46 cm. from the "head." The native name of this support is I-möñ-gdhe, a staff such as old men lean upon.

Upon the top or "head" of the pole was tied a large scalp, ni-ka nōñ-zhi-ha. About one end, 14 cm. 5 mm. from the "head" of the pole, is a piece of hide bound to the pole by bands of tanned skin. This wrapping covers a basket work of twigs and feathers lightly filled with the down of the crane. The length of this bundle of hide is 44 cm. 5 mm. and its circumference about 50 cm. But this does not give an exact idea of the size of this basket work when it was opened for the ceremony, as the covering has shrivelled with age, it being twenty years this summer since the last ceremony was performed and the wrapping put on as it remains to-day.

This bundle is said to represent the body of a man. The name by which it is known, A-khōñ-da bpa, is the word used to designate the leather shield worn upon the wrist of an Indian to protect it from the bow-string. This name affords unmistakable evidence that the pole was intended to symbolize a man, as no other creature could wear the bow-string shield. It also indicated that the man thus symbolized was one who was both a provider and a protector of his people.

The accompanying pack contained a number of articles which were used in the ceremonies of the Sacred Pole. This pack is an oblong piece of buffalo hide which, when wrapped around its contents, makes a round bundle about 80 cm. long and 60 cm. in circumference. It was bound together by bands of raw hide and was called Wa-dhi-gha-be, meaning literally, things flayed, referring to the scalps stored within the pack. Nine scalps were found in it when I opened the pack at the Museum, and some of them show signs of considerable wear; they are all very large and on one are the remains of a feather, all of which has been worn away but the quill.

The pipe belonging to the pole and used in its rites was kept in this pack. The stem is round and 89 cm. in length. It is probably of ash, and shows marks of long usage. The bowl is of red catlinite, 12 cm. 5 mm. at its greatest length and 7 cm. 2 mm. in height. The bowl proper rises 4 cm. 5 mm. from the base. Upon the sides and bottom of the stone certain figures are incised which are difficult to determine; they may be a conventionalized bird grasping the pipe. The lines of the figures are filled with a semi-lustrous black substance composed of vegetable matter which brings the design into full relief; this black substance is also painted upon the front and back of the bowl, leaving a band of red showing at the sides. The effect is of a black and red inlaid pipe. When this pipe was smoked the stone end rested on the ground; it was not lifted but dragged by the stem as it passed from man to man while they sat in the sacred tent or enclosure. To prevent the bowl falling off, which would be a disaster, a hole was drilled through a little flange at the end of the stone pipe where it is fitted to the wooden stem, and through this hole one end of a cord made of sinew was passed and fastened, and the other end

of the cord securely tied about the pipe stem 25 cm. above its entrance into the stone pipe bowl.

The stick used to clean this pipe, *Ni-sin-din-be-shih*, was kept in a case or sheath of reed wound round with a fine rope of human hair, which was fastened with bits of fine sinew; a feather, said to be that of the crane, was bound to the lower end of this sheath. Only a part of the quill remains. Sweet grass, *Pe-zhe-shih-shin*, and cedar, *ma-shih*, broken up and tied in bundles, were in the pack. Bits of the grass and cedar were spread upon the top of the tobacco when the pipe was filled, so that when it was lit these were first consumed, making an offering of savory smoke.

Seven arrows, *Monpe-dhum-ba*, were in the pack. The arrow shafts are much broken; they were originally 45 cm. 5 mm. in length, feathered from the crane, and had stone heads. Part of the quills of the feathers remain, but the arrow heads are lost. A bundle of sinew cord, red paint *Wa the-zhi-de*, used in painting the pole, and a curious brush, complete the contents of the pack. The brush is made of a piece of hide, one edge cut into a coarse fringe and the hide then rolled together and bound with bands, making a rude utensil with which the paint, mixed with buffalo fat, was put upon the pole.

Those who may visit the Peabody Museum at Harvard University will notice upon the upper portion of the Sacred Pole something that looks like pieces of thick bark; it is the dried paint that remains from the numerous anointings of the pole, which ceremony was a thank offering for successful hunts and a prayer for future prosperity. The anointing or painting of the pole took place in July toward the close of the annual buffalo hunt after the tribe had reached that portion of their hunting grounds where they felt themselves reasonably secure from their enemies. The custom long ago, beyond the memory of the oldest man, so I was told by the chief of the *Höga* in 1888, was to perform this ceremony twice a year after the summer and winter hunt, but, within his memory and that of his father, it had been held only in the summer.

The rapid destruction of the herds of buffalo in the decade following 1870 caused the Indian not only sore physical discomfort, but also great mental distress. His religious ceremonies needed the buffalo for their observance, and its disappearance, which in its suddenness seemed to him supernatural, has done much to demoralize the Indian, morally as well as socially. No one can have his sacred rites overturned in a day and preserve his mental equipoise.

After several unsuccessful hunts of the tribe, poverty succeeded to their former plenty, and, in distress of mind and body, seeing no other way of relief, the people were urged to the performance of their ceremony of *Anointing the Pole*, although misfortune in hunting had made this in its integrity impossible. A new plan was suggested by which the ceremony could be accomplished and, as they fondly hoped, the blessing of plenty be restored to the people. The tribe had certain moneys due from the U. S. in payment for ceded lands, and through their agent they asked that

such a sum as was needful to purchase thirty head of cattle should be paid them. The agent, little understanding the trouble of mind of the Indians under his charge or the motive of their request, wrote to the Interior Department of Washington, that "The Omahas have a tradition that when they do not go on the Buffalo Hunt, they should at least once a year take the lives of some cattle and make a feast." This interpretation of the Indian's desire of spending his own money for the purchase of the means by which he hoped to perform rites that might bring back the buffalo and save him from an unknown and terrifying future, is a significant comment on how little the Indian's real life had been comprehended by those appointed to lead him along new lines of living and thinking. The cattle were bought at a cost of about \$1000. The ceremony took place; but alas! the conditions did not alter. A second time the tribe spent its money, but to no avail. New interests and influences grew stronger every month. The old customs could not be made to bend to the new ways forced upon the people. Opposition to further outlay arose from the government and amongst some of the people; and one year, two years, three years passed and the Pole stood silent in its tent, dreaded, as a thing that was powerful for harm, but seemingly powerless to bring back the old time prosperity to the people.

When, in 1888, the Pole was finally placed for safe keeping in the Museum at Harvard University, it seemed very important to secure its legend, known to the chief of the Hōūga. The fear inspired by the Pole was such that it seemed as though it would be impossible to gain this desired information, but it was finally brought about; and one summer day in September, the chief, Shu-de-na-zhe, came to the house of Joseph La Flesche, to tell the tradition of his people treasured with the legend of the Pole.

It was a memorable day; the harvest was ended and tall stacks of wheat cast their shadows over the stubble fields that were once covered with buffalo grass. The past was irrevocably gone. The old man had consented to speak but not without misgivings, until his former head chief cheerfully accepted for himself any penalty that might follow the revealing of these sacred traditions, which was held to be a profanation punishable by supernatural means.

While the old chief talked he continually tapped the floor with a little stick he held in his hand, marking with it the rhythm peculiar to the drumming of a man who is invoking the unseen powers, during the performance of certain rites. His eyes were cast down, his speech was deliberate, and his voice low, as if speaking to himself alone. The scene in that little room where we four sat was solemn, as at the obsequies of a past once so full of human activity and hope. The fear inspired by the Pole was strengthened in its very passing away. By a singular coincidence the touch of fatal disease fell upon Joseph La Flesche almost at the close of this interview, which lasted three days, and in a fortnight he lay dead in the very room where had been revealed the legend of the Pole.

According to the legend, the appointed time for the ceremony of

Anointing the Pole was in the moon, or month, when the buffalo bellow, the latter part of July. It was to follow the fourth tribal chase after the ceremony of the taking of twenty buffalo tongues and one heart had been performed four times. Then the Wa-ghdhe-ghe-tōñ subdivision of the Hōñga gens, which had charge of the Pole, called the seven principal chiefs, who formed the oligarchy, to the sacred tent to transact the preliminary business. They sat there with the tent closed tight, clad in their buffalo robes, worn ceremonially, the hair outside and the head falling on the left arm; they smoked the pipe belonging to the Pole, and ate the food provided, in a crouching attitude, and without a knife or spoon, in imitation of the buffalo's feeding, and took care not to drop any of the food. Should, however, a morsel fall upon the ground, it was carefully pushed toward the fire; such a morsel was believed to be desired by the Pole and, as the legend says, "no one must take anything claimed by the Pole."

When the council had agreed upon the day for the ceremony, runners were sent out to search for a herd of buffalo, and, if one was found within four days, it was accounted a sacred herd, and the chase that took place provided fresh meat for the coming ceremony. If, however, within four days, the runners failed to discover a herd, dried meat preserved from their previous hunts was used.

In this preliminary council, each chief, as he took a reed from a bundle kept in the sacred tent, mentioned the name of a man of valorous exploits. When the number of brave men agreed upon had been mentioned, the Hōñga gave the reeds to the tribal herald to distribute to the designated men, who, on receiving them, proceeded to the Sacred Tent, and by giving back to the Hōñga their reeds, accepted the distinction conferred upon them. It was now their duty to visit the lodges of the tribe and select from each tent a pole to be used in the construction of a lodge for the ceremonies. This they did by entering the tent and striking the chosen pole, while they recounted the valiant deeds of their past life. These men were followed by designated men from the Hōñga gens, with their wives, who withdrew the selected poles and carried them to the vicinity of the sacred tent, where they were set up and covered so as to form a semicircular lodge. It was erected upon the site of the Sacred Tent, which was incorporated in it, and opened toward the centre of the tribal circle; and, as the poles taken from all the tents in the tribe were used in its construction, this communal lodge represented the homes of the people.

Up to this time the tribe may have been moving and camping every day, but now a halt is called until the close of the ceremony. To the communal tent the seven chiefs and the headmen are summoned by the Hōñga and take their seats, all wearing the buffalo robe in the ceremonial manner. The herald on this occasion wears a band of matted buffalo-wool about his head with a downy eagle feather standing in it.

The Sacred Pole is brought forward to the edge of the communal lodge so as to lean out toward the centre of the Hu-dhu-ga. In front of it a circle is cut in the ground, the sod removed, and the earth made loose and fine.

From this time to the close of the rites, all the horses must be kept outside the Hu-dhu-ga, and the people must not loiter in or pass across the enclosure. To enforce this regulation, two men were stationed as guards at the entrance of the tribal circle.

The pipe belonging to the Sacred Pole is smoked by the occupants of the communal tent, and the bundle of reeds brought. Each chief, as he draws the reed, mentions the name of a man, who must be one who lives in his own lodge as the head of a family, and not a dependent upon relatives (what we would term a householder). As the chief speaks the name, the herald advances to the Pole and shouts it aloud so as to be heard by the whole tribe. Should the name given be that of a chief, the herald will substitute that of one of his young sons. The man called is expected to send by the hand of his children the finest and fattest piece of the buffalo meat, of a peculiar cut known as the *te-zhu*. If the meat is too heavy for the children, the parents help to carry it to the communal tent. The little ones are full of dread, and particularly fear the fat which is to be used upon the Pole. So, as they trudge along, every now and then they stop to wipe their wee fingers on the grass so as to escape any blame or possible guilt of sacrilege.

Should any one refuse to make this offering to the Pole, he would be struck by lightning, be wounded in battle, or lose a limb by a splinter running into his foot.

The gathering of the meat occupies three days, during which the *Hōnga* are singing at intervals, by day and night, the sacred songs, which echo through the camp and enter into the dreams of the children.

The songs belonging to the ritual of the corn are first sung, followed by those relating to the hunt, all in their proper sequence. If a mistake in the order is made, the *Hōnga* lift up their hands and weep aloud, until the herald, advancing from the Sacred Pole, wipes away the tears with his hands and the wail ceases, and the songs go on.

On the morning of the fourth day the meat is spread upon the ground before the Pole in parallel rows, the full length of the communal lodge. The keeper of the Pole and his wife then advance to perform their part in the ceremony. He is clothed in the usual shirt and leggings and his cheeks are painted in red bands. The woman wears over her gala dress a buffalo robe with the skin outside which is painted red; so are her cheeks, and bands of the same color are on her glossy, black hair, and to the heel of each of her moccasins is attached a strip of buffalo hair, like a tail.

Songs precede and describe every act of the keeper. When he is about to cut the fat from the meat offered to the Pole the *Hōnga* sing the Song of the Knife, and, at the fourth repeat, the keeper grasps the knife. So, on the fourth repeat of another song, he cuts off the fat, and lays it in a large wooden bowl which is carried by his wife. In this vessel the soft fat and a peculiar clay made red by baking are kneaded into a paint, with which the keeper smears the pole.

In the circle excavated in front of the Pole, a buffalo chip is kindled and sweet-grass and cedar leaves laid upon it, through the smoke of which the seven arrows are now passed for purification and consecration. The

leather covering is removed from the body of the Pole, and the woman comes forward and thrusts the seven arrows, one by one, through the basket-work thus exposed. Each arrow has its special song. If an arrow passes clean through, and falls so as to stand in the ground, all the people shout for joy, as this indicates special victory in the war and success in hunting.

Now, the buffalo meat is gathered up and laid away, and four images are made of grass and hair and set up before the Pole. These are to represent enemies of the tribe. Then the herald goes forth shouting: "Pity me, my young men, and let me once more complete my ceremonies;" meaning by this that the men of the tribe should lay aside all other affairs and considerations and devote themselves to the part they were to play in the final act of the ceremony.

While the warriors are putting on their ornaments and their eagle-feather war-bonnets, and getting their weapons in order for a simulated battle before the Pole where they should act out in detail their past brave deeds of war, the people crowd together at either end of the communal tent as to a vantage point whence to view the dramatic spectacle.

Some of the warriors appear on horseback outside the camp and charge upon it, crying out, "They have come! They have come!" (This was once done in so realistic a manner as to deceive the people into the belief of an actual onslaught of an enemy, to the temporary confusion of the whole tribe.) The warriors fire upon the images before the Pole, and the chiefs within the communal tent shoot back in defence of them; this charge is made four times and then the images are captured and treated as conquered. With this stirring drama, which is called "Shooting the Wa-ghdhe-ghe," or Pole, the ceremonies come to an end, which ceremonies, according to the legend, were instituted "to hold the people together."

On the following day the He-di-wa-chi, under the leadership of the In-ke-tha-be gens, takes place. This is participated in by all the tribe, men, women and children. The He-di-wa-chi is a dance about a pole, which has been cut and painted for the occasion with peculiar ceremonies. After this dance the camp breaks up, each family following its own pleasure, and all rules and regular times as to hunting are at an end for the season.

The legend states that the finding of the Pole occurred while a council was in progress among the Cheyennes, Arickerees, Pawnees, and the Omahas, which then included what are now the Ponka and Iowa tribes. The object of the council was to agree upon terms of peace and decide upon rules of war and hunting.

The legend runs as follows: "During this time a young man who had been wandering came back and said: 'Father, I have seen a wonderful tree!' and he described it. The old man kept silent, for all was not yet settled between the tribes.

The young man went again to visit the tree, and on his return repeated to his father his former tale of what he had seen.

The old man kept silent, for the chiefs were still conferring.

At last when everything was agreed upon between the tribes, the old man sent for the chiefs and said:

"My son has seen a wonderful tree. The thunder birds come and go upon this tree, making a trail of fire that leaves four paths of burnt grass toward the four winds. As the thunder birds light upon the tree, it bursts into flame and the fire mounts to the top; still the tree stands burning, but no one can see the fire except at night."

When the chiefs heard this tale, they sent runners to see what it might be, and the runners came back and told the same story,—how the tree stood burning in the night. Then all the people had a council, and they agreed to run a race for the tree and attack it as if it were an enemy. The chiefs said: "We shall run for it; put on your ornaments and prepare as for battle."

So the young men stripped and painted themselves, and put on their ornaments, and set out for the tree, which stood near a lake. The men ran and a Ponka reached it first and struck it, as he would an enemy.

Then they cut the tree down and four men, walking in line, carried it on their shoulders to the village. And the people sang four nights, the songs which had been composed for the tree, while they held their council. The tree was taken inside the circle of lodges and a tent was made for it. The chiefs worked upon the tree, and shaped it and called it a human being. They made a basket-work of twigs and feathers, and tied it on the middle of the pole for a body. Then they said: "It has no hair!" So they sent out to get a large scalp, and they put it on the top of the pole for hair. They sent out a herald to tell the people that when all was completed they should see the pole.

Then they painted the pole and set it up before the tent, leaning on a staff, and called all the people; and all the people came,—men, women and children. When all the people had gathered, the chief stood up and said:

"You now see before you a mystery. When we are in trouble we shall bring our trouble to him. To him you shall make your offerings and requests; all your prayers must be accompanied by gifts. This (pole) belongs to all the people, but it shall be in the keeping of one family, and the leadership be with them, and if anyone desires to lead (*i. e.* become a chief and take responsibility in the governing of the people), he shall make presents to the keepers, and they shall give him authority."

When all was finished, the people said, "Let us appoint a time when we shall again paint him, and act before him the battles which we have fought." So the time was fixed in the moon when the buffaloes bellow.

Then follow the details of the ceremony already outlined, ending with the words: "This was the beginning of the ceremony, and it was agreed that it should be kept up."

The legend goes on: "The people began to pray to the Pole for courage and for trophies in war, and their prayers were answered. The Pole is connected with thunder and war, the authority of the chiefs and of the hunt."

At the time when the Pole was discovered, both the tradition of the

Omahas and the Ponkas concur in stating that the people were living in a village near a lake, and that the tree, which was evidently some distance from the camp, grew near a lake. The exact position of this village is not yet identified, but it was in all probability at no great distance from the Red Pipe stone quarry in the southwestern part of South Dakota.

Time forbids an enumeration of my historical researches in this connection, but the oldest records and authentic maps indicate that the Pole could not have been cut at any time since 1673.

The establishment of the order of chieftainship and the government of the tribe, as it has been known during the present century, antedated the institution of the pole. Several political changes had already taken place before that event.

I cannot at this time recount and analyze the Legend of the Seven Old Men, who are said to have instituted the government by seven chiefs, and to have established the Ni-ni-ba-tōñ or pipe subgens in certain of the ten gentes of the tribe. This legend deals with a political change and a religious innovation that long antedated the advent of the Sacred Pole. When the seven old men introduced the sacred tribal pipes, there were already in the tribe three distinct groups of insignia of as many forms of worship, namely:

The four sacred stones, in the custody of the Ma-thiñ-ga-ge-he gens, having their peculiar ritual.

The Honor Pack, the Sacred Shell and the Pole of Red Cedar, of the Thunder Rites, in charge of the We-jin-shte gens; and

The songs and ritual of the Hede-wache, committed to the Inkethabe gens.

The entrance of the Omahas into the group of tribes that agreed to respect and to observe the ceremony of the Wa-wañ—Pipes or Calumets of Fellowship—not only tempered their sun worship through the teachings of the ritual of this ceremony, but opened a new path to tribal honor, by which a man of valor and industry could reach equality with the hereditary chiefs in the government of the tribe. The sacred ritual pipes had the same function within the tribe, as the Wa-wañ or Calumets of Fellowship had between different tribes, and they also were ornamented with the peculiar woodpecker heads, the upper mandril turned back and painted in the same manner as upon the Fellowship Calumets. Upon one of these tribal pipes seven of these heads were placed in a row, referring to the seven chiefs; on the other pipe there was but one head, symbolizing the unit of authority which must be reached by unanimity of the seven chiefs in all decisions.

Poles had long been used in the tribe as symbols of religious beliefs and of authority.

The He-di-wa-chi and its pole bear evidence of great age, and it seems not improbable that it sprang from the same root as the Sun Dance of the Dakotas which has developed so differently.

The Pole of the Thunder rites, belonging to the Sacred Tent of War, in the care of the We-jin-shte gens, was of red cedar, 1 m. 25 cm. in length,

to which was corded a Zhi-be or leg, 61 cm. long. A rounded stick like a club 43 cm. long, also of red cedar, was bound about the middle of the pole. The Thunder gods used clubs as weapons; one of the ritual songs of the Tent of War says: "Your grandfather, fearful to behold is he! When your grandfather lifts his long club, he is fearful to behold!" In olden time, when the rites were performed in the spring when the first thunder peal was heard, a part of the ceremony was the painting of this pole.

It is probable that this pole was the prototype of the Sacred Pole; the two have features in common: the Zhi-be or leg; the body on the one being the thunder club, and on the other bearing the name of the bow shield, used by warriors to protect the wrist from the bow-string; both poles were painted with due ceremony at appointed times; both referred more or less directly to thunder, and any profanation of either was avenged by that power, the guilty being struck by lightning. It will be recalled that attention was first drawn to the tree, from which the Sacred Pole was shaped, by the thunder birds coming to it from the four quarters and the mysterious burning that followed; so that the pole became, in the minds of the people, endowed with supernatural power by the ancient thunder gods.

The government by the seven chiefs was at first confined to hereditary rulers, drawn from certain subdivisions of certain gentes. By a slow process in the course of time men of ability rose into power, and honors were won and worn by those whom the people recognized as leaders, until, at last, the oligarchy of seven became representative of individual attainment, and of gentes and sub-gentes hitherto debarred from participation in the governmental affairs of the tribe.

The name given to the Sacred Pole, Wa-ghdhe-ghe, bears testimony to this political change in the chieftainship. Wa-ghdhe-ghe is made up of the prefix wa-, indicating the power to do, and ghdhe-ghe, the name of the ceremony of placing the mark of honor upon the daughter of a chief. (This consisted in tattooing a small round spot about half an inch in diameter upon the forehead, and, upon the chest and back, just below the neck, a circle with four equidistant points projecting from it. These symbols refer to the sun and the four quarters.) The right to put the mark of honor upon a daughter was not hereditary, but could be gained through the performance of one hundred certain deeds, called Wa-dhiñ-e-dhe. The name of the pole, Wa-ghdhe-ghe, signifies the power to do, or perform this ceremony, ghdhe-ghe, the mark of honor.

The Sacred Pole of the Omahas was, as we have seen, scarcely an innovation as a symbol, although it stood for the authority of new ideas that had been slowly developing within the tribe. In it and its ceremonies nothing that had been gained in the past was lost, the supernatural control of man was recognized, together with his ability to achieve for himself honor and rank. It stands as a witness that society, even in its primitive tribal conditions, is not an inert mass of people, but an organization operated upon by laws kindred to those which we have learned to recognize as instrumental in the unfolding of the mind of man.





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